

CLAIM

1. (previously presented) A method for providing warranties that warrant at least one fact associated with a digitally-signed electronic message, said method comprising the steps of:

assigning a warranty cap to an entity that issues digital certificates;

tracking a warranty volume for the entity;

receiving a request for a warranty from a subscriber to whom the entity issued a digital certificate, the request for the warranty specifying a warranted amount and claim period;

evaluating the request for the warranty to ensure that the warranted amount will not cause the entity's warranty volume to exceed the entity's warranty cap;

transmitting a message that confirms issuance of the requested warranty, the message being digitally signed by a component maintained by the entity, the warranty comprising a contract between the entity and the subscriber, a relying party being a third-party beneficiary to the contract;

the relying party sending a validation request to a relying participant, said relying participant being in communication with said entity, the validation request requesting validation of the digital certificate of said component; and

said relying participant transmitting a validation response to the relying party.